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## MORPC Announces 2011 Sustainability Award Winners

**(Columbus – October 10, 2011)** The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) 2011 Summit on Sustainability and the Environment took place October 11 at the Center for Science and Industry (COSI). The inspiring event explored the challenges in going green and featured prominent environmental speakers and a variety of workshops. The event also marked the occasion for MORPC's second annual Sustainability Awards given in the areas of Agriculture & Local Foods, Energy & Air Quality, Greenways & Water Quality, Materials Management, and Sustainable Growth.

**The Agriculture & Local Foods Award was given to Local Matters.** Local Matters has been leading the way advocating for access to local, healthy foods in central Ohio. Their comprehensive approach includes educating people of all ages, and making local food increasingly available by connecting producers/growers, distributors and consumers. Their long-term impacts stem from the visibility they have created around the issue of local food and the variety of programs they offer. Their programs and services are unique and innovative, and include the Veggie Van, Food Matters (k-2 program), operating The Greener Grocer, and more.

**The Energy & Air Quality Award was given to Anheuser-Busch.** Anheuser-Busch has implemented on-site wastewater treatment and a bio-energy recovery system. This primarily reduces the load on the City publicly owned treatment works (POTW), and reduces Anheuser-Busch's cost for City sewer charges. Further, Anheuser-Busch has captured the treatment byproducts to generate energy and reuse materials. The treatment approach illustrates a sustainable solution: economic benefit, multi-faceted environmental benefit, and benefit to community through reduced demand on the POTW and electric grid. Anheuser-Busch's approach has measurable long-term impacts, and is an innovative approach to managing energy and air quality. The bio-energy recovery system addresses both alternative energy and air emissions. The methane generated by the process supplies 15 percent of the brewery's fuel needs, resulting in a savings of \$1M/year. The savings can also contribute to maintaining and creating jobs in the region.

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*Working to Build a Better Region*

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**The Greenways & Water Quality Award was given to the City of Westerville, Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative (CORGI), The Ohio State University.** This partnership implemented a network of rain gardens in the Brook Run subdivision in Westerville. This is the only project of its kind in Ohio, and the right-of-way rain garden designs are unique nationwide. Sixteen residential rain gardens were installed, and further grant funding was received through OSU to implement five rain gardens in the right-of-ways and provide additional monitoring. This is a unique and innovative project in central Ohio, demonstrating leadership and collaboration among the partners involved. The educational components of the program create a long-term impact in the community and beyond. The measurable environmental benefits are demonstrated by the storm water flow quantity reduction of 80-83 percent.

**The Materials Management Award was given to The Kroger Company, Columbus Division.** The Kroger Company, Columbus Division has expanded its role as an active community leader with the Kroger Compost/Recycling Program. Originally implemented in July 2008, store associates in five targeted departments (Produce, Floral, Deli, Bakery, Dairy) separate compostable materials from regular trash. Being aware that valuable natural resources need to be saved, Kroger pioneered this type of waste diversion for the State of Ohio, in collaboration with the Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Ohio Grocer's Association. They have also implemented an educational program for their staff and customers. While Kroger is not required to compost, they are taking a leadership role with the hopes of inspiring other Ohio grocers to do the same.

**The Sustainable Growth Award was given to Franklin County Board of Commissioners, Smart Growth Overlay.** On August 9, 2011, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners overhauled its commercial development standards, adopting a new zoning regulation known as the Smart Growth Overlay. The overhaul followed years of extensive research and community consultation. The Smart Growth Overlay improves unincorporated Franklin County's zoning regulations to comply with Smart Growth principles—namely mixing of land uses, encouraging compact land use patterns, fostering walkability and facilitating transportation mode choice. This overlay provides uniform guidance for small communities in the county, and includes principles that enhance and protect the quality of life. This overlay is unique in the region and can serve as an example.

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MORPC is a voluntary association of 47 local governments in central Ohio serving the region through planning, direct service, public policy information and innovative programming and intergovernmental coordinating services in the areas of transportation, land use, energy conservation, the environment and housing.